(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefore; and

(e) in what manner Government are meeting their subsistence requirement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) No death due to starvation has so far been reported by the States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh & Orissa.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) Under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) foodgrains are being allocated to the State Governments/UTs at subsidized rates. Under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), wheat and rice are being supplied to the poorest of the poor @ Rs. 2/- per kg. and Rs. 3/- per kg. respectively. As an intiative for alleviation of hunger from amongst the most vulnerable sections of the society such as old people, widows and disabled persons, terminally ill persons, persons aged 60 years or more, etc. with no family or societal support or assured means of subsistence, the AAY has been expanded recently thereby including 50 lakh additional families. The number of AAY families has thus risen to 1.50 crore. Besides, under various Welfare Schemes, foodgrains are being supplied to the State Governments/Union Territories at Below Poverty Line (BPL) rates.

Norms for drinking water

1736. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to implement EU norms for bottled drinking water and mineral water from January 1, 2004;

(b) if so, whether the national agency for quality norms and certifications, Bureau of Indian Standards has written to all licencees of bottled drinking water and mineral water to implement its amended standards formulated in October, 2003 in respect of permissible pesticide residues; and

(c) if so, what were the main reasons for accepting the EU norms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare *vide* their Gazette Notification GSR 554 (E) dated 18th July, 2003 have prescribed revised maximum residue limits for pesticide residues in the packaged drinking water which will be effective from 1st January, 2004. No changes have been made in respect of packaged natural mineral water.

(b) All licensees for packaged drinking water have been informed by Bureau of Indian Standards for taking appropriate action for ensuring implementation of revised norms of pesticide residues as laid down in Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Gazette Notification GSR 554(E) dated 18th July, 2003.

(c) Taking cognizance of the report published by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) regarding presence of pesticide residues in the bottled water, BIS concerned Technical Committee reviewed the specification for packaged drinking water and packaged natural mineral water being high priced value added products and decided to amend the limits for pesticide residues to bring it in line with the best in the world (EU norms) in order to protect the consumer interests.

Cases pending in consumer courts

†1737. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of cases registered and pending in various consumer courts;

(b) the reasons for the delay in disposal of the cases;

(c) whether any decision has been taken by the Commission to constitute more benches in order to dispose off the consumer cases rapidly; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) As per the information made available by the National

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.